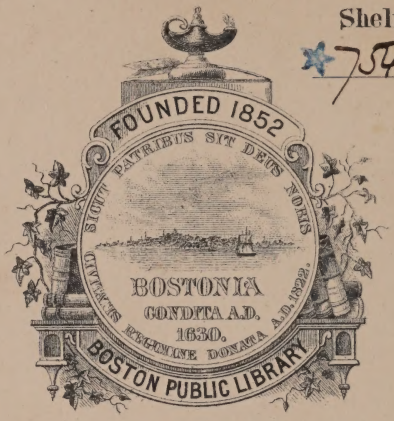
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 08632 318 3
4325

Shelf No.
7542.111



Heliotype Printing Co.

The Faith once delivered to the Saints.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE UNITARIAN MEETING-HOUSE

IN

WINDSOR, VT.,

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1846.

By REV. A. A. LIVERMORE,

PASTOR OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN KEENE, N. H.

BOSTON:

WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS,

118 Washington Street.

1847.

The Faith once delivered to the Saints.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE UNITARIAN MEETING-HOUSE

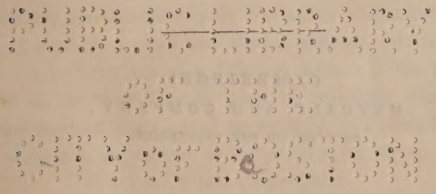
IN

WINDSOR, VT.,

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1846.

By REV. A. A. LIVERMORE,

PASTOR OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN KEENE, N. H.



BOSTON:

WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS,

118 Washington Street.

1847.

Dup. of no. 13 in *7451-57

B. 86.
(25.685)
Sept. 22, 1891.
From D.R.

CAMBRIDGE:
METCALF AND COMPANY,
PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOSTON

Windsor, Dec. 10, 1846.

Rev. A. A. Livermore.

Dear Sir : — The undersigned have been appointed a committee to communicate to you the following resolutions, adopted by the gentlemen of the Unitarian Society at this place, at a meeting held last evening.

" Resolved, That the thanks of this Society be presented to the Rev. A. A. Livermore for the truly able and eloquent sermon this day preached by him at the dedication of our meeting-house.

" Resolved, That the distribution of the statement of the Unitarian faith therein contained will do much to promote the cause of Liberal Christianity.

" Resolved, That a copy of the sermon be respectfully requested for the press."

Allow us, dear Sir, for the Society and ourselves, to express a strong desire that you may feel at liberty to comply with the request contained in the last of the foregoing resolutions, and to assure you of the high esteem in which you are held by

Your friends and servants,

Hampden Cutts,
Benjamin S. Newhall,
Samuel H. Price,
} *Committee.*

Windsor, Dec. 11, 1846.

Messrs. Cutts, Newhall, and Price.

My dear Sirs : — I thank you for the kindness with which you have communicated the resolutions and wishes of the Unitarian Society of Windsor in your letter of the 10th inst. The object of the discourse was to proclaim the sentiments of Unitarian Christianity, as held by one individual at least, in a plain and simple manner, without argument or attack upon other Christians of a different faith. If the publication of such a statement of doctrines can do good in repelling misrepresentations, or diffusing the truth of the Gospel as we hold it, I shall yield to your judgment and wishes in the matter as better than my own.

Very truly and respectfully

Your friend and servant,

A. A. Livermore.

Messrs. Cutts, Newhall, and Price, *Committee.*

DISCOURSE.

"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." — 1 Tim. ii. 5.

My Christian Friends and Brethren: —

The work of erecting a house of public worship has been completed, and you have now assembled to dedicate it as a holy offering to Almighty God. To you this must be a joyful occasion, for your laudable wishes have been accomplished under a gracious Providence, and your sacrifice is ready to be offered. You have now come to hallow these walls for the first time — may the last be far distant! — with devout meditation, prayer, and thanksgiving to the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. You would, in accordance with the ancient example, "keep the dedication of this house of God with joy." "You enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise."

And here let us consider for a few moments, why a joyful and a grateful spirit should fill the heart on this

day. Why have you laid these foundations, and reared these walls, and garnished them with beauty? We answer, for the most glorious object in the universe; for the solemn worship of the Infinite Creator, for the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, the conversion of sinners, the culture of the spiritual life, the salvation of immortal souls. The world knows nothing so great as these ends. There are splendid edifices upon the earth; the mighty pyramid, the colossal amphitheatre, the magnificent pagoda, the golden palaces of kingdoms, the massive fortresses of war, the brilliant galleries of art, the proud gates of cities, the storied columns of victory, the marble monuments of the dead, which the daily sun looks down upon, as he turns his glory upon the successive countries of the rolling globe, but we hesitate not to say that he beholds no structure, built with human hands, devoted to so high a purpose as the humblest Christian sanctuary. There may be no pillars of porphyry or gilded tapestry for the outward adorning, but there is the purer glory of a heavenly consecration and a godlike use overshadowing its lowly walls. The cloud of the divine presence hovers over it. It is irradiated with light from the heaven of heavens. It is as the ladder, seen in the vision of old, whose top reached to heaven, whereon angels were ascending and descending, and an alliance was kept up with the skies. It is as the antechamber to the spiritual world, where man comes to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, and plead the promises of his everlasting covenant. "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

But after speaking thus in general of the high and holy object to which this house of Christian worship is devoted, it is natural and proper on an occasion which brings together so many friends and strangers, who take a deep interest in your welfare, and inquire after your ways, that you should desire some more particular statement of the Faith as held by Unitarian Christians. To some it may be unknown and new, and to others odious, and odious because unknown. To those to whom it is dear, its discussion will be welcome. To those who are anxiously inquiring for the way of truth, to speak of it may be timely and profitable, and we would hope to all not without interest. For if we feel ourselves to be grounded in the truth, we shall not fear lest the weakness of others' errors will overcome the strength of our truth. God grant both to speaker and hearer the spirit of truth, candor, and charity!

To begin with the foundation doctrine of a Great First Cause of all things; as Unitarian Christians, we believe, in the language of the text, in "one God," and in only one. "The first of all the commandments," said Christ, "is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord." We contend that by one God is as strictly meant one being, as, when a man is spoken of, one being, and only one, is understood, and not two persons, or three in one. The use of the personal pronouns in the Scriptures demonstrates this position. The Jews walked in the light of revelation, and never worshipped, and do not to this day, more than one God. Only one God, supreme and indivisible, is revealed in

the Old Testament, and, as we believe, only one in the New. Nature knows but one Creator, Providence but one Guide, and the soul but one object of the highest adoration. It is the bane of idolatry that it leads men to worship gods many, and lords many; and it is a fearful injury to the pure religion of Jesus to present to the worshipper more than one God to be adored, and from whom we supplicate spiritual favors. For if we address two or three persons or natures or distinctions in the Godhead, we must have two or three separate beings in our mind at the same time, and thus be distracted in our attention, while our thoughts are flitting from one to another; for it is an impossibility to regard three as literally one, or one as three. Happily, however, these difficulties do not often occur, so much stronger is the word of God than human traditions and theories, for we seldom hear even from Trinitarians themselves any prayers except those directed to the Father Supreme, and we would only ask that what is disused in practice might also be stricken from the creed.*

But not to dwell longer on this tenet of the absolute oneness of God, which gives the name of Unitarian to our body, we pass to another point in our belief, which we would fain bring out into clearer view than has been done in past ages of the church. What adds an immeasurable interest to our faith in one God is not so much the revelation of what are called by theologians his natural attributes, as his unity,

---

* Appendix, A.

omnipresence, and omniscience, — though that is much, — as of his moral character, most impressively condensed in those words which our Saviour so often used, "Our Father." The one God is our Parent. What a word, if we will think of it, is here! In our familiarity with it, we do not perceive its strange beauty, its infinite tenderness. God, our Father! the humble word of time and earthly relationship, the household title, the endeared name of home, lifted up on high and applied to Him who is the Infinite King of the Universe, the Mighty Maker and Head of worlds and systems and beings without number or bound! What kindness is here, and what knowledge of human wants! Could there have been a more comforting, enlightening, strengthening, cheering revelation out of the depths of infinity and eternity than this of the Fatherhood of God? Was it not the very last blessing which Heaven even in its inexhaustible riches could bestow, to whisper in the ear of the tempted, stricken child of mortality, "Thy Father in heaven"? In heaven, and yet thy Father! So high, so pure over all, and yet setting his love upon the feeble creature of the earth, caring for him with an infinite wisdom, and pitying and pardoning him with an everlasting mercy! There is nothing like it in the world. It is the crown of the Gospel of Christ. It is the essence of Christianity. When men come around us with their dark doctrines, that seem almost to forbid the sun rising on the evil and on the good, and the rain descending on the just and on the unjust, we ask no stronger refutation than this, — "Our Father, who art in heaven."

When our friends are few, and our days evil, and our hearts fail us, we will open the blessed volume of inspiration, and seeing there these all-illuminating, all-cheering words, Our Father, all shall be well again. This shall be our light, our cordial, our anchor of eternal hope. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In connection with this doctrine of the fatherly character of God, and as a consequence from it, we believe in, and with all earnestness would proclaim, the Brotherhood of man with man, without exception of color, condition, or country. God is our Father; therefore man, his creature and the child of his love, is our brother. These terms Father and brother are figurative, taken from our earthly relationship, and therefore imperfect in a degree. For God is more than Father, man is more than brother. In both cases, the tie is spiritual and immortal. It relates not ot the circumstances in which we are born, as do these bonds of kindred, but to the very essence of our being as moral and spiritual creatures. This great doctrine of human brotherhood is the keystone to Christian morality, as the doctrine of God our Father is to Christian piety. In obedience to it, all wars should for ever cease, all slavery be overthrown, all empty distinctions exploded, all dissensions in the church be pacified, and everywhere man love, sympathize with, and labor for man as a brother. Haste, O, haste the happy time, when such shall be the state of the world!

In the next place, we would emphasize our faith in

Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Though often accused of denying the Lord that bought us, and making the cross of none effect, we nevertheless cherish this faith of salvation from our sins in the name and through the mediation of Christ as the chief thing of life, the highest manifestation of the paternal interest of God in mankind. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We believe in Jesus Christ, not as God the Son, for we find no such words between the lids of the Bible, though they often may be found in human works, but as the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, the Mediator between God and man, the Intercessor with the Father. His life was without spot or blemish of sin; his example of all he taught, perfect; his teachings, the truth; his labors, love; and his death instinct with a mighty efficacy to reconcile, not God to man, but man to God, and to draw earth within the circle of heaven. We cannot admit that Christ was literally God, or equal with the Almighty; for he said, "My Father is greater than I"; and at another time, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." And when he said at another time, "I and my Father are one," he elsewhere explains what he meant by that oneness, for he prayed that his disciples "might be one, even as we are one." It was not therefore identity of nature, but union of affection, will, and effort. We cannot add a second and third being to the divine

Unity, nor can we divide Christ into two beings, or natures, one finite and the other infinite, one human and the other divine, because we cannot find any authority for it in the Scriptures. The same text that says God is one, also declares that the Mediator is one. "For there is ONE God, and ONE Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." We cannot discern a single intimation of the twofold nature of Jesus, either in his own teachings, or those of his Apostles, or in the Christian faith of the first two centuries of our era, and we are constrained therefore to regard it as a mere unauthorized inference from certain texts, a pure theological fiction, to explain the difficulties of the Trinity. Christ may have applied to him both terms, God and man, in a figurative sense, but literally he was neither one nor the other, neither "very God," nor "mere man," but an exalted being midway between the two, or as the record says, a Mediator. He is like no other, and has neither predecessor nor successor. As there is but one God, so there is, there will be, there needs to be, but one Christ. He is his own, and not another's, the first-born of a new moral creation, the second Adam to lead on the generations of a new spiritual race. Human classifications are at fault. A new being has appeared upon the earth. We believe, indeed, most firmly in the *divinity* of Christ, namely, that the spirit was given him not by measure, and that he was created, authorized, and sent on a divine mission to save the world; but we reject his *deity*, that is, that he is the second person

in the Godhead, "equal in power and glory" with the Supreme Father; not because it is a mystery, for there are many mysteries connected with religion, as there are many in Nature and Providence; but because it is an absurdity, and a palpable contradiction in terms.

As it regards our views of Salvation, we hold that Jesus Christ saves mankind *from* sin by working a moral change in their hearts, and making them better, holier, spiritually-minded; not that he can save a single soul *in* its sins, by presenting himself as a substitute to avert the doom of the transgressor, and by suffering in his own person in the garden and on the cross all the mountains of miseries and agonies which would otherwise have fallen upon the millions of millions of guilty beings for having broken the laws of their Maker. His mission was not a piece of diplomacy, contrived in the cabinet of heaven, to clear the wicked by punishing the innocent, but a breathing forth of the love of God, an expression of his interest and mercy, an instrumentality to work a change not above, but below, — not in the divine purposes, but in human life, — to effect the regeneration and sanctification of souls lost in sin. He preached repentance, and, by a necessary consequence, remission of sins, for God is both "*faithful* and *just*, as well as *merciful*, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He represented the difficulty as not on the part of God, who is, and ever was, ready to have mercy on the returning prodigal, but on the part of man, who is slow to feel his sins as sins, to be sorry for them, and to forsake them.

Jesus came not, therefore, to soften God's law, which is ever the same, but man's heart, which may be changed. He taught, entreated, lived, died, that men might listen as never before to truth and duty, — that their whole nature might be sanctified to God, and every thought be brought into obedience, — that the will might bow to the supreme will, — that reason and conscience might become to man as the veritable voices of his Maker, — that the two great moral affections, connecting man to man in benevolence, and man to God in piety, might be quickened into living exercise, — and that the pure spiritual aspirations, Faith and Hope, might take hold of the immortality opened before them, — and that thus, altogether, man, instead of bowing himself down and burying himself in the narrow, selfish, sensual interests bounded by the flesh and time, might take into view the glorious range of a never-ending state of being beyond the grave, and live to virtue, heaven, God. Hence his lessons come to us, when we are ourselves, as a ray of light to the bewildered traveller, as a draught from the cold spring to a thirsty soul, as the tear of sympathy to the friendless sufferer. Nothing has ever been so beautiful as the Sermon on the Mount, or so pathetic as the parable of the prodigal son, or so solemn as the judgment-scene, or so searching as the condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees. Let them that have ears hear, and let them that have eyes read, and let them that have hearts feel, these divine discourses of the Gospel, until they shall penetrate through the common crust

of moral insensibility and worldliness, and reach with a healing power the last recesses of the soul.

Again; we believe in the Holy Spirit, so frequently mentioned in the New Testament, not as a distinct person, being, or even distinction of the Godhead, but as that Godhead itself, God himself, the Father, the Great and Good Spirit, in action, giving Christ his power and wisdom, enabling the apostles to work miracles, ever guiding, blessing, and saving all, spreading light and love in boundless tides over the moral creation, and at all times and in all places, would we but be sensible to it, gently but powerfully striving, though with perfect consistency with human freedom, to win the sinner from the error of his way. We think there are some who speak of the spirit of God too much, as the ancient prophet did, when ridiculing the heathen deity before the priests of Baal, — "He is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." They speak of times and places, unmindful that the spirit of God is in all places at all times, filling and embosoming all, and if unperceived, it is by the dull mind, and if unfelt, it is by the insensible heart. It is the common faith that God is wisely and benevolently working throughout the realms of Nature, the material universe; shall we atheistically exclude him from the moral world, from the kingdom of mind, thought, conscience, affection, aspiration? No. We rejoice to believe that he is with the soul, helping its infirmities, and providing for its wants. We would not give up this faith for worlds. It is the encourage-

ment to prayer. It is the motive to moral effort. It is the blessed assurance that we are not engaged single-handed against the principalities and powers of evil, — the omnipotence of habit, — the torrent of example, — the fury of the passions, — the acquired depravity of the heart, — and the cares and follies of the world; but that we have "a strong-siding champion," a divine helper, who will suffer no faithful heart to fail in the moral battle, but will bring us off conquerors and more than conquerors. Yes, one of the highest ends of Christ's mission was to direct man to the Comforter and Sanctifier, and to inspire confidence in his heart of the alliance of spiritual powers in his behalf, working around him and within for his redemption.

In regard to those questions which have so long agitated the world under the head of the Calvinistic and Arminian controversies, we believe there is, as in the topics already touched upon, a medium point, nearer the truth than either side. The law of human opinions is in all matters too much a law of extremes, but nowhere more so than in theology.

Man is depraved, — we cannot open our eyes, and not see it, — but not totally depraved. He is born weak, not evil. He has depraved himself. God "made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." His mind is not naturally in a state of sin, for sin is the act of a moral agent, any more than his body is naturally in a state of disease. Sickness is contrary to nature; so is sin the moral disorder contrary to nature. And as we should not take one

to the lazaretto or pest-house to exhibit the natural powers of the physical, so we should not seize on crimes and vices as a description of the spiritual, constitution. All the propensities are good, all the appetites and passions were inserted for a benevolent purpose, and only when they usurp the throne of reason and conscience, and renounce their allegiance to God, do they change from convenient servants into terrible tyrants. Who would wish or dare to cross out one God-given faculty, were it even one that allied him most to the earth? It were a horror to think of it. Man would then lose his wonderful and fearful adaptation to two worlds, and would be cast forth a poor, mutilated creature. Let us not think to improve upon the creative skill of the Framer of his body, any more than upon that of the Father of his spirit, nor libel his work, nor make him the author of sin.

We contend earnestly for the moral freedom of man, and that he is responsible only so far as he is free; that God has richly provided the means and motives of spiritual life, and it depends on him whether he will accept the terms. We cannot indeed do any thing — lift a finger, move a step — without God, but we have as much assurance that he will help us, if we help ourselves, in things spiritual, as in things material; in cultivating the soul, as in cultivating our fields. If we will not sow, we shall not reap, is not more true in the earthly than in the divine husbandry. In a single word, the obstacle is with man. God has provided every thing, has made man in his own image, little lower than the angels, crowned him with honor

and glory, given him will, reason, conscience, affection, aspiration, set before him the choice of good and evil, life and death; and, to crown all, he speaks audibly from heaven, and says, — "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Man cannot change his heart from sin to holiness without God, but so he cannot without his coöperation think or stir. But if he will go to work in good earnest, he will soon find there is a mighty power working within and around him, through ten thousand beneficent agencies and influences, to will and to do of its good pleasure. To the seeking, praying heart, all nature, all providence, all grace, all heaven and earth, time and eternity, bring their holiest contributions of light and love. "All things work together for good to them that love God." "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation!"

The remaining points of belief are the immortality of the spirit, and a future state of righteous retribution, of suffering to the bad, and of happiness to the good, as in the present life, only with greater certainty and more exact correspondence. Some assert that a portion of the human family will be saved hereafter, but that the greater part will be sentenced to unchangeable and eternal woe. Others assert, that all will be saved, without respect of persons, or distinction of moral character. These doctrines of Calvinism and Universalism are both plain and intelligible, though, we contend, erroneous extremes. We would proclaim a doctrine, if possible, equally plain and intelligible, — that it is rendered to every man in the

future world precisely according to his deserts, or, as the Scriptures say, "according to that he hath done in the flesh, whether good or bad." All the good will not enjoy alike, Lazarus as much as Abraham, because all are not equally good, and so are not equally prepared to enjoy God and his works. Each vessel may however be full; the absolute happiness may be the same, though not the relative, for every vessel may not have the same capacity. On the other hand, all the wicked may not suffer equally, because there are different depths of guilt; and surely the imperfect justice of human tribunals, that punishes crimes according to their turpitude, must more than be equalled by the equity of the divine. We believe in a retribution of degrees, of equity, of benevolence, not of "vindictive justice"; and that suffering in all worlds and all states of being, judging by the character of God and the analogy of this life, and the end of man's creation, and by the spirit if not the letter of Scripture, must tend towards a final restoration to virtue and happiness. Still we presume not to pry into futurity. It becomes us to fear rather than speculate concerning the future state of the wicked, for solemn are the warnings of the sacred word, and fearful the glimpses it gives us into the condition of the impenitent sinner. Of the continuance of future punishment we are not absolutely informed, and we must leave it in the hands of Him, who will employ suffering as long as it is needed, and no longer. For to predicate absolute eternity of future woe from the terms in the Bible, *everlasting* and *eternal*, and other words

of like import, is to overlook the analogy of faith, and comparison of Scripture with Scripture; for these terms are elsewhere applied to things of indefinitely long period, things not in their nature unending, and therefore limited by the connection in which they stand, as the Jewish ritual and priesthood, the possession of the land of Canaan by the chosen people, and other things of a similar nature.*

I have thus made a statement in plain and general language, not an argument, of the faith of Unitarian Christians. Many will perhaps differ from it in part; a few may agree with it entirely. Agreeing or disagreeing, may we look at the subject fairly and candidly, and make up our minds as in the sight and fear of God. We are not responsible for others, but for ourselves. "To his own master every man standeth or falleth."

We believe, yet further, that our faith has most powerful auxiliaries to spread it, and eternal foundations to support it, and therefore that it cannot be overthrown, though all the powers and priesthoods on earth should war against it, but that in the end it will leaven Christendom.

For we appeal to the Bible, both the Old and New Testament, against creeds, confessions, traditions, customs, however ancient or authorized by man. We say, — "To the law and to the testimony," not in the mere "letter which killeth, but in the spirit which giveth life."

---

* Appendix, B.

We appeal to conscience, the moral sense in man of right and wrong, the echo of the divinity; and we are certain that it is the ally of a just theology, of equitable views of God's character and attributes, of accountableness, sin, and punishment.

We appeal to reason, twin-sister of conscience, not as in rivalry of the Scriptures, but in beautiful harmony therewith; and we feel and know by good experience, that in the unprejudiced, unsophisticated common-sense of mankind, our doctrines will gain an immovable hold. We do not hold to reason above revelation, but to revelation interpreted, the only way it can be, by reason.

We appeal to the affections and aspirations of the heart, and we find these to be our allies; in poetic words, —

> "And exultations and agonies
> And love, and man's unconquerable mind,"

which yearn after a higher state of the soul, a purer condition of society, and the perfect reign on earth, as in heaven, of "liberty, holiness, love."

We appeal to the grand principles of Protestantism, to which half the Protestant world have proved false, the Bible as the standard of faith and practice, and the right and duty of private judgment in these high matters, independently of popes and presbyteries, assemblies and alliances.

We appeal to the spirit of our own free institutions and republican government, which proclaim the equality of man with man in his rights and duties, and which is opposed to church governments founded on

the monarchical and aristocratic principles of the old countries,— the bishoprics, the councils, the synods, the power of one or a few over the many, — but which gives toleration to every sect and denomination. The great ideas of American freedom are identical with the principles of New England Congregationalism, fairly carried out, and in fact they thence caught that electric spark which has vivified the world, and made liberty a watchword among the nations.

We appeal, in fine, to the spirit of the age, which is in league, we believe, with a more earnest practical faith, with a more resolute religious spirit, a more sober, real, living, every-day piety and morality, cleared from the mists and speculations and traditions of dark and distant ages, and in harmony with the progress of society, the advance of science, the triumphs of the arts, the spread of popular institutions, the diffusion of useful knowledge, the universal education of the people, and the glorious movements of modern reformation against the hoary vices of the past, — idolatry, ignorance, cruelty, slavery, war, licentiousness, and intemperance. To all these, and to more and mightier allies, to the Father of spirits, and to the Saviour of sinners, who ever liveth to make intercession for us, we appeal for the truth of our views, and for their saving power and spread in the world. If they are not the truths of revelation, they will and they ought to go down. But if, as we must solemnly believe, they are in accordance with the teachings of Jesus and his apostles, they will live, and not die. They will win their way over all

obstacles, and gain the heart of the world. The truth is mighty and it will prevail.

Take courage, therefore, brethren, in your undertaking. Be of good cheer. Be active in these infinite concerns. Be wide awake to your spiritual and eternal interests. Labor, pray, confer together. Kindle up a pure flame of brotherly love and heartfelt devotion in your own hearts, and in the hearts of your fellow-men around. Believe, hope, persevere unto the end, and you cannot fail of great and good results. In due season, you shall reap, if you faint not.

To this faith, then, "once delivered to the saints," this faith of the Scriptures, of reason, of conscience, of fervent affections and high aspirations; to this faith of Protestantism, of freedom, and of progress; to one God the Father, and to his Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and to the fellowship of the Holy Spirit of God; to the reading of the sacred volume; to the preaching of Christ, and him crucified; to the songs of praise, and devout meditations, and penitence and prayer; to the observance of the Christian ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the joys of Christian communion and conference, we would dedicate these now hallowed courts. We would consecrate the pulpit for the faithful, and heart-searching, and soul-moving administration of the divine word, — the pews for the attentive hearing and devout reflections and resolutions of the worshippers, — the singing-seats for the solemn strains of sacred melody, — the doors for the entrance of successive generations of the young and old, pressing to

the altar of God, and the feet of Jesus, — the walls to resound with the songs and exhortations of the holy day. Here may the children be welcomed to the Sabbath school, and taught by faithful and affectionate teachers the beautiful precepts and promises of their Saviour. Here may the mourner come and find comfort, the sinner be warned and rescued, and all guided and cheered on in the way everlasting. Here may many souls be born out of the low earthly mind into the high spiritual life, and be prepared to enter into the inheritance of heaven. Here may you become better husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters; better citizens in your town, better patriots to your country, and better philanthropists to your race. And may the outward institutions of religion, generously and faithfully supported by your people, result in inward sanctification, and heavenly-mindedness, so that when these walls shall fall into ruins, it may be found that you not only dedicated this temple, built with hands, to the Most High, but that you also dedicated yourselves as the living temples for the residence of his indwelling spirit; so that you shall all at last, not one family broken, not one wanderer lost, enter into that higher sanctuary, eternal in the heavens, and perform that nobler worship, ascribing "blessing, and honor, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Amen.

APPENDIX.

A. Page 8.

Mr. John Wilson, of England, has published a most valuable work, entitled, "The Concessions of Trinitarians; being a Selection of Extracts from the Writings of the most eminent Biblical Critics and Commentators." The following very remarkable fact is stated in the Preface to that work. He says, — "In the present work, the author's chief aim has been to put forth what he conceives to be strong presumptive evidence for the great Biblical truth, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the sole and Supreme Deity, on whom every other person or being is dependent, and from whom they have derived their existence and their powers. This presumptive evidence is involved in the extraordinary fact of the most distinguished Trinitarians either having distinctly acknowledged, that, apart from each other, the texts commonly adduced in support of a Triune God, and of the Deity of the Son, and the Holy Ghost as a third hypostasis in the Godhead, do not prove these doctrines; or having rendered and interpreted them in such a manner as to show their invalidity for the purpose for which they are brought forward; thus unintentionally and directly, but not the less conclusively, betraying the insufficiency of the foundation on which it is attempted to erect the fabric of Trinitarianism."

B. Page 20.

"Our Orthodox friends, on the one hand, would have us either avow the doctrine of endless misery, or disavow it. Our Universalist brethren, on the other, would have us profess the doctrine of universal salvation, or deny it. We do not doubt that either of these opinions, eternal misery to the impenitent, or universal salvation, is more intelligible, definite, popular, and instantly effective, than the doctrine of spiritual retribution which we hold; a doctrine which forbids us from saying what we cannot know, — *how long* there may be sinners, and therefore sufferers, in God's universe. We associate sin and suffering together. They will end together; they will live together, and God's word, to say the least, has left an awful uncertainty upon the future and final state of the wicked. We wish neither to take advantage of a few obviously rhetorical passages in the Scriptures, to found on them the doctrine of endless misery; nor of a few others, to wrest from them the doctrine of immediate and universal salvation. Studying the special passages which concern the future retribution in the light of the general tenor of the Scriptures, we arrive at those views of retribution which insist rather upon the heinousness and peril of sin, and the inevitable consciousness of guilt and sorrow, and suffering and alienation from God and heaven, than upon the duration of punishment, of which we pretend to know nothing certainly. . . . . We doubt not that this view of retribution is eminently Scriptural, and in the end infinitely efficacious over every other; although we confess its want of equal definiteness with either of the others, and that it takes some intelligence and patience fully to understand it, and carry it out in all its affecting and warning applications; and still further, that it admits variety in the form in which it is substantially received." — *The Christian Inquirer.*

In a similar spirit, in some respects, the distinguished John Foster, the Essayist and Baptist minister of England, says, in a letter to a young clergyman on the duration of future punishments, dated September 24, 1841, Vol. II., pp. 262 – 270 of his Life and

Correspondence: — "I acknowledge myself *not* convinced of the Orthodox doctrine. If asked, *Why* not? — I should have little to say in the way of criticism, of implications found or sought in what may be called incidental expressions of Scripture, or of the passages dubiously cited in favor of final, universal restitution. It is the moral argument, as it may be named, that presses irresistibly on my mind, that which comes in the stupendous idea of eternity."

Again: — "I acknowledge my inability (I would say it reverently) to admit this belief, together with a belief in the divine goodness, — the belief that 'God is love,' that his tender mercies are over all his works. Goodness, benevolence, charity, as ascribed in supreme perfection to him, cannot mean a quality foreign to all human conceptions of goodness; it must be something analogous in principle to what himself has defined and required as goodness in his moral creatures, that, in adoring the divine goodness, we may not be worshipping an 'unknown God.' But if so, how would all our ideas be confounded, while contemplating him bringing, of his own sovereign will, a race of creatures into existence, in such condition that they certainly will and must — *must*, by their nature and circumstances — go wrong, and be miserable unless prevented by especial grace, — which is the privilege of only a small proportion of them, and at the same time affixing on their delinquency a doom of which it is infinitely beyond the highest archangel's faculty to apprehend a thousandth part of the horror."

Again: — "But, after all this, we have to meet the grave question, *What say the Scriptures?* There is a force in their expressions at which we well may tremble. On *no* allowable interpretations do they signify less than a very protracted duration and formidable severity. But I hope it is not presumptuous to take advantage of the fact, that the terms, everlasting, eternal, for ever, original or translated, are often employed in the Bible, as well as other writings, under great and various limitations of import; and are thus withdrawn from the predicament of *necessarily and absolutely* meaning a strictly endless duration. The limitation is often, indeed, plainly marked by the nature of the subject. In other instances the words are used with a figurative indefiniteness, which

leaves the limitation to be made by some general rule of reason and proportion. They are designed to magnify, to aggravate, rather than to define."

The whole letter is written with great power and eloquence, and is worthy of the attention of every inquiring and candid mind.

THE END.